

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 9-22 are pending in the present application. For at least the reasons set forth below, Applicants submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. Objection to the Claims

The Examiner's objection to claims 17, 19, and 22 has been obviated by the amendments of these claims in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion.

III. Rejection of Claims 9, 10, 16, 18 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 9, 10, 16, 18 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over German Patent 198 29 730 ("Berberich" reference), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,646,500 ("Li" reference). Applicants submit that the rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

Amended claim 9 recites the following:

9. An airbag control unit for a vehicle, comprising:
- an internal ground;
 - an integrated circuit, wherein at least one component of **the integrated circuit is connected to the internal ground;**
 - a converter having an electrical isolation from a main electrical system of the vehicle, wherein the converter is configured for supplying an electrically isolated supply voltage to the at least one component of the integrated circuit, and wherein the converter is connected to the internal ground to provide electrical isolation of the internal ground from the main electrical system of the vehicle;
 - and
 - at least one **coupling element having an electrical isolation from the main electrical system**, wherein the coupling element is configured to be connected to the integrated circuit and **transmit data solely within the airbag control unit.**

The above-recited features are fully supported by the original specification, e.g., Fig. 2 of the present application clearly shows that the coupling element 10 performs signal exchange solely within the control unit 4.

In support of the rejection of claim 9, the Examiner contends that Berberich teaches the claimed features of: a) converter (allegedly taught by 12c/2b''/2b'/13a in Berberich) having an electrical isolation from a main electrical system (allegedly taught by system 3 in Berberich); and b) coupling element (allegedly taught by 2a''/2a' in Berberich). (Office Action, p. 3). However, the Examiner's asserted interpretation of Berberich clearly fails to meet the limitations of amended claim 9. First, to the extent the Examiner includes element 12c of Berberich as being a part of the claimed "converter," this interpretation clearly contradicts the limitations of claim 9 that the "converter" is a part of the control unit, and that the "converter" is electrically isolated from the main electrical system, since element 12c of Berberich is clearly shown as being a part of the system 3 (which the Examiner asserts is equivalent to the claimed "main electrical system"). Second, to the extent the Examiner contends that elements 2a''/2a' in Berberich constitute the claimed "coupling element," it is clear that elements 2a''/2a' are not "configured to be connected to the integrated circuit," let alone "transmit data solely within the airbag control unit"; instead, Fig. 1 of Berberich clearly shows elements 2a''/2a' directly linked to the main electrical system 3, and Berberich indicates that "the coil pair 2a' and 2" serves for the transmission of signals by means of high frequency fields," (English translation of Berberich, p. 8).

In addition to the above, Applicants note that Li is cited by the Examiner solely for the teaching of an integrated circuit configured to receive data signals, and the teachings of Li clearly do not remedy the deficiencies of Berberich as applied against claim 9.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the overall teachings of Berberich and Li do not render claim 9 and its dependent claims 10, 16 and 18 obvious. Claim 21 recites limitations regarding a coupling element, which limitations are substantially similar to the above-recited limitations recited in claim 9, and therefore the teachings of Berberich and Li do not render claim 21 obvious for the reasons stated above in connection with claim 9.

IV. Rejection of Claims 9, 10 and 16 to 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 9, 10 and 16 to 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Berberich in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,844,469 (the “Regazzi” reference). Applicants submit that the rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

As more fully set forth above, the Berberich reference fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claims 9 and 21. Furthermore, Regazzi has not been asserted to overcome, and does not overcome, the above-noted shortcomings of the Berberich reference as applied against parent claims 9 and 21. For at least these reasons, the teachings of Berberich and Regazzi do not render unpatentable claims 9 and 21, as well as their dependent claims 10 and 16-18.

Independent claims 19 and 21 include features analogous to those included in claim 9, e.g., the coupling element exchanges data solely within the control system, and therefore the teachings of Berberich and Regazzi do not render unpatentable claims 19 and 21, as well as their dependent claims 20 and 22, for the reasons stated in connection with independent claim 9.

Independent of the above, with respect to claims 17, 19 and 22, to the extent the Examiner contends that “a coupling component [is] represented by **signals I1 and U3**” in Regazzi, this interpretation is clearly incorrect: the claimed “coupling element” is a physical component, as clearly stated in parent claim 9 (“at least one coupling element having an electrical isolation from the main electrical system, wherein the coupling element is configured to be connected to the integrated circuit”). Accordingly, Regazzi clearly does not teach or suggest the claimed limitation regarding the “coupling element” recited in claims 17, 19 and 22, and therefore dependent claims 17, 19 and 22 are additionally distinguishable over Berberich and Regazzi for these additional reasons.

V. Rejection of Claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Berberich and Li references in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,667,283 (hereinafter referred to as the “Seki” reference). The rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

Claims 11 and 12 ultimately depend from claim 9. As noted above, the overall teachings of Berberich and Li do not render parent claim 9 obvious. In addition, the Seki reference has not been asserted to overcome, and does not overcome, the above-noted shortcomings of the Berberich and Li references as applied against parent claim 9. Therefore, dependent claims 11 and 12 are allowable over the applied references.

VI. Rejection of Claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Berberich and Li references in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,650,030 (hereinafter referred to as the “Has” reference). The rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

Claim 13 depends from claim 9. As noted above, the overall teachings of Berberich and Li do not render parent claim 9 obvious. In addition, the Has reference has not been asserted to overcome, and does not overcome, the above-noted shortcomings of the Berberich and Li references as applied against parent claim 9. Therefore, dependent claim 13 is allowable over the applied references.

VII. Rejection of Claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Berberich and Li references in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,061,139 (hereinafter referred to as the “Young” reference). The rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

Claim 14 depends from claim 9. As noted above, the overall teachings of Berberich and Li do not render parent claim 9 obvious. In addition, the Young reference has not been asserted to overcome, and does not overcome, the above-noted shortcomings of the Berberich and Li references as applied against parent claim 9. Therefore, dependent claim 14 is allowable over the applied references.

VIII. Rejection of Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Berberich and Li references in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,725,242 (hereinafter referred to as

the "Belau" reference). The rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

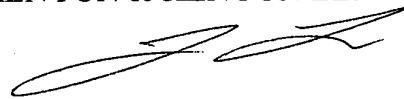
Claim 15 depends from claim 9. As noted above, the overall teachings of Berberich and Li do not render parent claim 9 obvious. In addition, the Belau reference has not been asserted to overcome, and does not overcome, the above-noted shortcomings of the Berberich and Li references as applied against parent claim 9. Therefore, dependent claim 15 is allowable over the applied references.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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